

Doctoral Dissertation 2018 (Summary)

The Relationship Between Backgrounds of Elderly People
And Their Conscious/Unconscious Self-Image:
Mainly with Script Analysis in Transactional Analysis Theory

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The Relationship Between Backgrounds of Elderly People and Their Conscious/Unconscious Self-Images: Mainly with Script Analysis in Transactional Analysis Theory

Abstract

Nowadays, aging population is growing all over the world. Japan is also experiencing super aging society after population above 65 years old reached over 21 % in 2007. Under the circumstances, many elderly people are still in good health and energetic. Thus, some people say that classifying people aged 65 and over as senior is not practical in modern society. Many citizens above 65 years old are socialized and spend active lives. They engage in some sort of social activities, like job, community activities, volunteering, study, and enjoying hobbies or culture lessons. Meanwhile, however, many senior citizens have difficulties in living their old age with mental harmony for their depression or uneasiness.

Our objective of this study is to find out appropriate mental supports and interventions for these kinds of people.

Previous investigations showed that mental and physical health was greatly affected by self-image, such as a sense of satisfaction and happiness. Thus, we studied about self-concepts of senior citizens and the relationship between conscious and unconscious ideas about themselves, then examined which type of backgrounds formed the self-images.

Study I

Subjects and methods

One hundred fifty-seven independent human subjects above 65 years old were recruited. Their self-images in awareness were assessed with subjective well-being (SWB). Their unaware self-concepts were measured with Baum test (Drawing tree test) created by C. Koch. Their emotions were also surveyed with Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) and State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI).

Results

Their SWB scores were higher than the average ones of college students. Thus, it was clarified that their mindful images about themselves were significantly good. We also found that SWB was negatively linked with SDS and STAI. While, their average nonconscious-images in Baum test were relatively poor. No correlation was found

between their unaware images and SDS or STAI.

Discussions

We surmised that these uncorrelated results were obtained as these tests targeted people with different psychological levels.

Study II

Several subjects were selected from the study-one participants. They showed characteristic association-patterns between conscious and unconscious self-image. We surveyed which type of personal history created those traits.

Subjects

Nine individuals were chosen from the study-one participants giving their agreement on this survey.

Methods

Semi-structured interview, based mainly on script analysis in transactional analysis (TA), was performed.

Results

The connection between their bring-up history and the Baum test interpretations was studied particularly.

The relationship between their backgrounds and unaware self-image was clarified through this interview. For example, positive experience in early life made good self-concepts in nonconscious level. In the meanwhile, however, experiencing negative parental relationships badly affected unconscious ideas about themselves. In such a case, the images were not good or bad.

Discussions

In this study, we recruited seniors who did social activities energetically. They had high SWB scores although some of them had problems in unaware images. In the consciousness, they were active, self-actualized and satisfied with their lifestyles. The cause was sought in detail with the interview results and other information. Some participants had a sense of oppression and pushed themselves so hard to act strong because of their negative self-concepts. Unless they had serious problems, however, these results suggested that their high SWB scores were caused by their resignation,

self-acceptance, or rationalization mechanism originated from the advanced age. We supposed that nonconscious idea about themselves essentially affected their basic mental stability, self-esteem, and self-confidence. But these results showed that for the people without big problems, in actual daily life, high SWB scores could be related with how they believe themselves to be.

Support to senior citizens feeling stress in their social lives

These results indicated that two approaches following Baum test were effective. All subjects went through Baum test, and the results showed whether the subjects have problems or not in unconscious self-image. If YES, for the people with serious troubles, rewriting individual life-script was likely to be valid in their unconsciousness. If NO, cognitive-behavioral approach, a way to change cognition and thinking patterns, could be productive towards people without major problems.